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SUNCHON CHEMICAL PLANT

In the past the National Suncheon Chemical Plant in Suncheon, Pyongan Namdo, produced only carbide, oxygen, lime, and nitrogen, but now it also produces carbonic acid and calcium.

The plant attained its 1948 production goal on 1 November, and aimed to reach at least 126 percent of that goal by the end of the year. The calcium-carbonate manufacturing shop, for example, exceeded its production quota during the second and third quarters of 1948 in spite of the shop's brief period of operation. Calcium carbonate is used mainly for processing rubber, drugs, printing ink, autogenous welding, toilet articles, gunpowder, etc. Preparations for the opening of the urea-processing shop are also being made.

The production record of different items for the third quarter period of 1948 is as follows: carbide, 125.5 percent; calcium cyanamide, 126.6; oxygen, 131.6; calcium carbonate, 144.8.

Limestone, the raw material for carbide, is shipped to this plant from the Wonsok-san Mine in Pukohang County, Pyongan Namdo. This mine is owned by the plant. After the limestone is crushed into powder, it is baked for a week in the lime furnace to produce quicklime. Carbide is made by mixing this quicklime with anthracite coal in a ratio of 100 to 80 and baking in the electric furnace for an hour.

The chief technician of the plant stated that until last summer push-carts were used to transport the quicklime in the plant. Now, rails and dump cars have been installed which saves the manpower equivalent of six men's labor. He considered this a phenomenal improvement. Improvements made in conveying the finished carbide by mechanical means also saved six to seven men's labor. The number of accidents, including burns from the intensely hot carbide, was also reduced. Constant attempts are being made to improve efficiency and to eliminate hazards.

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This plant manufactures from 40 to 50 welding rods a day, which is enough to maintain self-sufficiency.

The production of carbide has increased to 330 percent of the output recorded before the liberation.

There are 16 nitriding furnace units in this plant, 8 of which were in operation. The chief technician stated that one of them is coated outside with silicon to prevent heat escaping. This is a new method, now being tested, which was originated by the plant.

Information dispatchers are distributed throughout the plant, and the developments in each shop are reported each day to the Workers League. At one time a report was made of the weathering of the carbide. While a method to prevent the weathering was being considered, workers unhesitatingly worked overtime and in 2 days transferred 10 tons of carbide to a safer place. During the winter, it was reported that the filtering machine had frozen. The workers promptly installed electric heaters which improved conditions greatly.

The fervent patriotism of all workers and the optimum efficiency in operation of the plant promise brilliant success for the Sanchon Chemical Plant in the forthcoming 2-year economic program for 1949 - 50.

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